

TSAC Update

Helping Students Achieve Their Goals Since 1974

October 2006 Vol. 4

TSAC Board Adopts New Rules

Sept. 28 marked a productive meeting of TSAC Board of Directors, which adopted rules for two new loan forgiveness programs, among other items. The board meets twice a year—the fourth Thursday of September and March.

The new programs will be implemented at the earliest possible time after they have been approved by the Tennessee Attorney General and have been filed with the Secretary of State.

The board also adopted new rules for the Tennessee Education



Top Row, Left to Right: Pete Abernathy, David Gregory, Morgan Branch, Dr. Robert Ruble
Bottom Row, Left to Right: Dr. Richard Rhoda, Dr. Katie High, Mary Kate Ridgeway, Janette Overton, Janice Cunningham, Faye Weaver, Paul Starnes

The board unanimously approved rules for the new Tennessee Math and Science Teaching and Graduate Nursing Loan Forgiveness programs, which are the result of legislation signed into law in June. The nursing program is designed to help increase the number of registered nurses in Tennessee by increasing the number of nursing educators, and the teaching program aims to boost the number of tenured teachers in Tennessee that are certified to teach courses in math and sci-

ence. The new programs will be implemented at the earliest possible time after they have been approved by the Tennessee Attorney General and have been filed with the Secretary of State. The board also adopted new rules for the Tennessee Education Lottery Scholarship Program to address legislative changes made by Tennessee's 2006 General Assembly and to address technical issues that have arisen during the past year that require further explanation. The new provisions that the board approved include allowing students who attend private postsecondary institutions to be eligible for Tennessee HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grants, increasing HOPE scholarship award amounts and updating rules to allow for reference to weighted

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grade point averages where applicable. Draft versions of the new lottery scholarship rules, as well as the two new loan forgiveness programs, are available on TSAC's Web site (www.CollegePaysTN.com).

TSAC's 2007-2008 proposed budget request was also approved by the board. The corporation is requesting funding improvements for several of its programs, including the Tennessee Student Assistance Award (TSAA) Program,

...Continued on page 4

Message from the Executive Director

Do the following terms mean anything to you? CHKDSK, CD, DIR, DEL, ERASE, RD, REN

These were DOS commands, entered at the C:\> prompt in the pre-Windows world of the 1980s. If you're younger than 30 you've probably never seen these terms before. But to us old-time PC pioneers these commands are like old friends.

Before Windows, computers did just one thing at a time. I remember learning that with Windows, you could have a Lotus 1-2-3 spreadsheet and a MultiMate word-processing document on your computer screen at the same time. Back then, I couldn't understand why anybody would want to do that, since you could only do one thing at a time anyway.



Fast-forward 20 years, and multi-tasking has become a way of life. Just look at our kids, who simultaneously study, listen to their iPods, cruise the internet, talk on their cell phones, update Facebook, and instant message their buddies.

In our jobs, we have all become multi-taskers. Few of us have the luxury of working on just one thing at a time, the way we used to in the C:\> world. I know that's true in your financial aid office. It's also true at TSAC, where we are simultaneously bringing out new default prevention initiatives, updating eGrandS, writing rules for new loan forgiveness programs, lobbying for additional state appropriations, establishing regional outreach offices, selecting scholarship recipients, updating publications, responding to legislators, and moving our offices from one floor of the building to another! Now that I think about it, we've learned a lot from our multi-tasking kids!

Bob Ruble

Get to know the TSAC team

TSAC is saying farewell to an important family member. Courtney Dillard will be joining AOII as their Director of Communications on October 23, 2006. Courtney has been a valued member of the TSAC family for three years. She began her career in higher education as the Middle Tennessee Marketing Specialist and grew into her current position as Director of Outreach for the Communication Services Division. Courtney has worked diligently to spearhead the creation of the TSAC Regional Offices along with managing the daily functions and performance of the Outreach Specialists. She serves as a vital member of the TELS Appeals committee and has been instrumental in the overall public relations and outreach efforts of the agency. Her willingness to help co-workers, students, school employees and the financial aid community is never ending. Anyone who has interacted with Courtney can attest to her jovial personality. She has truly enjoyed and valued the work she has accomplished here.

Courtney is a Lawrenceburg, Tennessee native and a graduate of UT Martin and MTSU where she

received her B.S. in Communications and her MBA, respectively. She loves to ski and hones her skills each year when her family takes their Christmas retreat. Her other passion is her husband Brandon and their four-year old . . . a yellow lab named Allie. Courtney and Brandon stay busy with traveling, enjoying a bike ride or going camping. In true multi-tasker form Courtney is a Southern Living representative and is in the process of building a new home.

We all wish Courtney the best in her new endeavors. Her cheerful personality and enthusiasm will be greatly missed.



Comments from Courtney

I have been fortunate enough to build lasting relationships with numerous financial aid professionals over the years. It has been, by far, the best part of my job...helping friends fix their problems! Although I look forward to new endeavors, I am confident in the agency's ability to serve our customers.

Tennessee Default Prevention Summit a Success

"I had a great time at the Summit and learned some new techniques in contacting delinquent borrowers," wrote Julia Gailey, Financial Aid Officer at Southeastern Career College. The Summit, conducted Sept. 12 in Nashville, included 43 school representatives. "The format of the meeting -- no overheads, a bright room, open dialogue throughout the day, and specific dialogue opportunity regarding the roundtable discussions -- contributed to the Summit's success," said Levis Hughes, Associate Executive Director for Loan Administration at Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation (TSAC).

The Summit brought Tennessee schools together under TSAC's leadership on an important public policy issue -- default prevention. The day began with opening remarks from Dr. Robert Ruble, TSAC's Executive Director, and Hughes. The day's objectives included developing a common understanding of current default prevention circumstances, trends and opportunities in Tennessee, and identification of potential default prevention initiatives.

The group reviewed cohort default rates and discussed why they are important. Presenters described current TSAC default prevention activities and distributed samples of a new booklet entitled, *Helpful Information to Manage Your Student Loans*. One presentation focused on characteristics of a successful default prevention plan. Another featured Pauletta Hanner Burns, Assistant Director of Financial Aid at Columbia State Community College, who shared her campus' plan for "at risk" students, as well as her experiences in default prevention at a previous school.

The afternoon was largely devoted to roundtable discussions among attendees of default prevention initiatives. Attendees moved from table to table in small workgroups to hear discussion leaders describe potential strategies along with the target audience, purpose, and benefit potential. The roundtable groups gathered feedback regarding the topics -- specifically, whether individual initiatives would be helpful, meaningful, useful, and important to schools, and how they might be made available. Participants also prioritized the proposed strategies.

Attendees were also invited to play a role in the development of default prevention initiatives going forward by participating in a new TSAC default prevention advisory group. "I felt the summit was very beneficial for not only TSAC, but for the financial aid personnel who attended as well. Thank you for taking the time to put it together," wrote Janette Overton, Director of Financial Aid at Johnson Bible College.



TSAC Board Adopts New Rules (Continued)

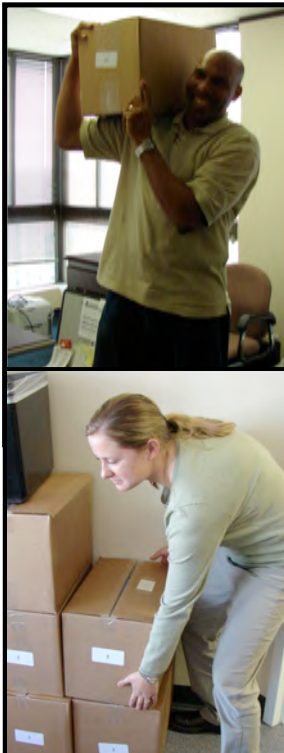
... the state's primary need-based financial aid program for low-income students. TSAC is also requesting more funding for the Tennessee Teaching Scholars Program, Ned McWherter Scholars Program and Tennessee Minority Teaching Fellows Program. Funding improvements are requested to help keep pace with rising costs of attending college and to increase the number of students served.

A Task Force that is evaluating the TSAA Program

presented preliminary recommendations for improvements, which the board approved. Recommendations include continuing to administer the program under a centralized model and changing the Priority Application Date from May 1 to March 1. The Task Force is continuing to evaluate the TSAA Program and will provide a progress report at the next board meeting, March 22, 2007.



Before the meeting adjourned, the board also heard an update of TSAC's communications and outreach efforts, discussed the corporation's primary guarantor competitors in Tennessee and heard a report on the first default prevention summit hosted by TSAC on Sept. 12.



TSAC Has Moved

There are big changes happening at TSAC. Along with new programs and new legislation, TSAC has added a new address to its list of current activities. The fun began on Oct. 1 when the Grants and Scholarship department joined the Communication Services division on the 15th floor of the Parkway Towers. Eventually, the Fiscal and Loan staff will relocate to the 17th floor of the same building. These efforts will help to streamline communication and customer service efforts to our financial aid partners.

Our new address is:

Tennessee Student Assistance Corporation
404 James Robertson Parkway
Parkway Towers, **Suite 1510**
Nashville, TN 37243

Employment Opportunities at TSAC

The Compliance and Legal Affairs Division has re-opened the search for a Lender Review Officer. For a review of the full job description, go to the TSAC website and click on Employment Opportunities.



e*GRandS Training in November

You should have already received information regarding e*GRandS training that will be held across the state Nov. 13 through Nov. 17. This training will include information regarding new programs and updates and enhancements to the system. If you did not receive the registration information please contact Jana McCall at (866)291-2675 ext. 105, or Jana.Mccall@state.tn.us. We look forward to seeing you there.

HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant Update

As previously reported, initial processing of 2006-07 HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grants was delayed due to uncertainty about how award amounts should be determined. TSAC sought advice from the Attorney General's Office, which has now been received.

Details have been shared with affected institutions and processing has now resumed. If you have questions regarding the HOPE Foster Child Tuition Grant, please contact Robert Biggers at (615) 253-7453 or robert.biggers@state.tn.us.

****ATTENTION****

PLEASE note that the only toll free numbers that should be given to students are as follows:

- ☉ Parents and Students with general financial aid questions need to call: (800)342-1663 OR (615)741-1346
- ☉ Parents and Students with LOAN DEFAULT questions must call: (800)257-6528
- ☉ If you are an Administrator, Lender or Counselor that knows with whom you need to speak at TSAC, YOU may call: (866)291-2675 OR (615)741-3000

Please see that all automated lines, publications, etc. in your office are corrected in order to insure that accurate information is being distributed. We greatly appreciate your assistance in this matter.

New e*GRandS Lottery System Enhancements Now Available

You can now access the new system enhancements mini-user guide located in the in E*GrandS NewsBox. In it you will find new lottery scholarship exceptions such as non-traditional students, military students, and students who were enrolled but never applied and are considered eligible. There are new ineligible certification indicators for students who:

- ☉ are non-degree seeking
- ☉ have completed program of study
- ☉ have non-continuously enrolled
- ☉ violate institution satisfactory academic progress policy
- ☉ drop from full time to part time enrollment or less than part-time enrollment

Compliance and Legal Affairs Update

In addition to the usual program reviews, the Compliance/Legal Affairs Division is working on several other projects. One is a Training Workshop for Financial Aid Officers that we will be hosting in December. We are looking for subjects that may be of interest to the financial aid community and the workshop will be geared for those with more experience than new aid officers.

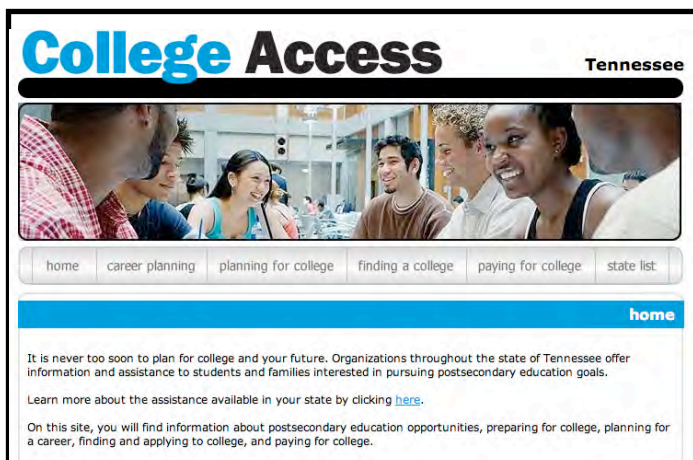
Another project in progress is establishing sites for College Goal Sunday, which is scheduled for Feb. 18, 2007. Mark your calendar. We are trying to finalize sites across Tennessee for students and parents to gather and receive information and assistance in completing the 2007-08 FAFSA. If your campus would be interested in hosting a volunteer site, please stop by the College Goal Sunday booth at the TASFAA Fall Conference or call Darolyn Porter at (615)253-7472.

Additionally, if you are interested in participating in a Quality Quest (non-punitive) review of your institution's financial aid office or would like additional information on the program and what it entails, please call Karen Myers at (615)253-7444.

TSAC participates in a New College Access Initiative

Tennessee students now have a comprehensive resource that makes college and career planning easier thanks to a new online service, Going2college.org, provided by the nation's student loan guaranty agencies. The Web site was developed as part of the College Access Initiative, which was included in the Deficit Reduction Act of 2005 and formalizes a foundational role of guaranty agencies in promoting access to postsecondary education. The industry has come together to create a global site where students can then select state-specific information regarding access.

When fully implemented, Going2college.org will feature comprehensive information about career planning, planning for postsecondary education, finding a college and paying for college. Details about the specific programs and services provided in each state will be available to students and families whenever they need it. Visitors just click on their state to learn where to get help in filling out a FAFSA, the types of federal and state scholarships and grants available, and which organizations and schools offer early awareness and intervention programs for students, with a special emphasis on low-income and first-generation college students. This Web site, developed in conjunction with Mapping Your Future, is designed to be a resource for students, families, guidance counselors, postsecondary institutions and community organizations. TSAC will be adding a link to CollegeforTN.org and CollegePaysTN.com Web sites as well so that students can enter through that portal.



"We hope this new Web site will link Tennessee students and families to the information and resources available to help pursue their postsecondary goals in this state," says Levis Hughes, Associate Executive Director for Loan Administration. The shell of the Web site has already been developed and is in use. TSAC will continue to add additional components to it to make career planning services and information regarding access easier.

Upcoming TSAC Events

- 11/21/06 Lottery Scholarship Open Forum
- 11/13/06 - 11/17/06 e*GRandS Training

Upcoming Conferences:

- 10/22/06 - 10/24/06
TASFAA Conference in Franklin, TN
- 11/18/06 - 11/21/06
Tennessee Counselors Association,
in Chattanooga, TN

TSAC Hosts Lottery Scholarship Open Forum

Now that we have a few years of experience with the lottery scholarship program, many in the financial aid community have suggested ways to simplify it.

TSAC will hold a Lottery Scholarship Open Forum Tuesday, Nov. 21 to brainstorm ways that which the lottery scholarship procedures might be changed to accomplish substantially the same thing that is being accomplished today, but in a simpler fashion.

We won't be talking about expanding the program, or shifting its focus, because those are matters for elected officials. Rather, we will discuss administration.

Participants will include college financial aid officers, high school counselors, legislators, legislative staff, and other interested public officials.

Members of the financial aid community who are unable to attend are invited to submit written comments to Tim Phelps, Associate Executive Director for Grant and Scholarship Programs, at tim.phelps@state.tn.us.